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ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been an increasing demand for accountability and evaluation of teachers. One nonthreatening method that might be used by teachers to evaluate and improve their classroom performance is self-appraisal. The experiment in this document uses the Teacher Self Appraisal (TSA) observation system which divides the teaching act into three categories: (a) methods, (b) objectives, and (c) expressions. By video taping classes and using these categories, it was hoped that the teacher would be able to recognize deficiencies and improve performance. Six tapings were made at two-week intervals, and after each session the tape was viewed and analyzed. Stops were made at 15 second intervals, and the teacher determined what was going on according to the above categories. The tape was then analyzed in terms of the teacher's goals for the class. In this particular case, the teacher was able to identify various deficiencies and problems after viewing the tapes. By the time the last tape was finished (and after much effort towards self-improvement on the part of the teacher) a definite improvement was obvious. (Appendixes describe the TSA observation system and contain a sample work sheet and results of the video taping.) (PB)

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Teacher Evaluation: A Self-Appraisal Method

by Daniel F. Detzner

In a period in the history of higher education when a term like "accountability" is a shibboleth heard on every hand, a study that describes a simple and pragmatic means for teachers to analyze and evaluate their classroom performance is welcome indeed. If the method of evaluation -- in addition to its apparent efficacy -- has the advantage of being self-administered and non-threatening, it should interest those responsible for educational accountability as well as those who are to be held accountable. Thus the Teacher Self-Appraisal (TSA) system, described in this issue of The General College Studies, merits the attention of teachers and administrators alike.

Daniel Detzner, the author of this report, undertook the project described here as a part of his second-year internship activities in the General College Teaching Internship Program. On the basis of his analysis of videotaped classroom sessions, he was able to correlate his classroom behavior with the goals and objectives of his course and, at the same time, discover ways in which he could improve his personal in-class performance. Mr. Detzner's project represents another example of how young General College staff members, under the aegis of the College Teaching Internship Program, are enriching their own professional training and, at the same time, inspiring their colleagues by example.

Readers of this entire issue will note that the appendices of Mr. Detzner's report supply a nomenclature for student-teacher interaction that should prove useful in any systematic discussion of classroom dynamics.

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In recent years there has been an increasing demand for accountability and evaluation of the teaching profession by state legislatures, universities, and administrators. Resolutions adopted both at the 1973 and 1974 General College retreats called for the creation of a committee or a task force to study teacher evaluation. Demands for teacher evaluation are often met by a skeptical, if not nervous, response by the teachers who are to be evaluated. How will evaluation be accomplished? Who will do the evaluating? What evaluative methods are applicable to the wide variety of teaching strategies, methods and disciplines? While all of these are relevant and important questions, answers to them are often less than satisfactory.

During the winter quarter 1973, as a part of my second-year internship, I undertook a project that offers one non-threatening method that might be used by teachers to evaluate and improve their classroom performance. In connection with a course I was teaching, I decided to use the Teacher Self Appraisal (TSA) observation system developed by Dr. Raymond C. Weidner of the University of Minnesota College of Education. Dr. Weidner is currently using his system in his position of project director for teacher self evaluation in Hennepin County and in his teaching of the College of Education course SeEd 5-171, Teacher Self Appraisal Observation Systems. During an extended interview and training session that I had with him, Dr. Weidner explained to me that TSA has been used by over 200 teachers in Hennepin County from 1970 through 1973. In essence, the Teacher Self Appraisal System divides the teaching act into three categories:

1. Methods -- the types of strategies used by an instructor to communicate ideas. Dr. Weidner subdivides these methods into nine types from lecturing to student dialogue. (See Appendix I for a more detailed breakdown of these methods.)

2. Objectives -- the varieties of affective and cognitive intentions that an instructor has for his students. Intentions are often determined by the type of method employed. (See Appendix II.)

3. Expressions -- the verbal and non-verbal cues that instructors use, either purposefully or inadvertently, to achieve the desired objectives for the lesson. Expressions can range from support to disapproval. (See Appendix III.)

By comparing these categories of teaching behavior with my objectives for GC 1-211, Man in Society, I hoped that it would be possible for me to test how closely theory matched reality. Systematically monitoring my actual classroom behavior and contrasting it with the clearly defined methods, objectives, and expressions that I employed, was intended to aid in the recognition of deficiencies and, hopefully, to improve performance.

To monitor my classroom behavior, I videotaped my Man in Society class six times throughout the winter quarter 1973. The first taping, which was purely for "cosmetic" purposes, will be discussed later. The other five tapings were made at two-week intervals, usually on Wednesdays. After each session, I viewed the tape and analyzed it in a systematic manner. Every fifteen seconds the tape was stopped and, using Dr. Weidner's categories, I determined what had been taking place in the classroom at that given moment. I had to decide what type of teaching method was employed, the kind of affective and cognitive objectives that were intended, and the verbal and non-verbal messages that were given. After completing this tedious task, I converted the data to percentages so that I could analyze what proportion of the class period was taken up by the various methods, objectives, and expressions. (See Appendix IV for a copy of the evaluation form used.)

From my analysis of the first tape, I learned to my dismay that I monopolized the discussion sixty-eight percent of the time during the class period, while responses from students were limited to only thirty-two percent of the class period. Since my overall goal in

this experiment was to improve my ability to conduct a classroom discussion, I clearly had my work at hand.

Before summarizing the data gathered from my analysis of five class videotapes, I should explain the "cosmetic" taping mentioned earlier. The purpose of this initial taping was to familiarize the teacher and students with the equipment and to allow me to take a subjective look at my behavior. By watching the tape, I learned among other things that I have a tendency to talk too fast, to over-explain some concepts, and occasionally to answer my own questions. I was satisfied with the tone and quality of my voice, the pacing of the discussion, and the apparent attention and interest of the class. The initial taping was useful because it gave me the opportunity to see myself for the first time as my students see me, rather than as the way I like to think of myself. In the five subsequent tapings, I continued to take note of and to modify some of my behavioral quirks. By making a conscious effort, I have been able to diminish my tendency to over-explain and to answer my own questions.

Appendix V provides the data on the various types of teaching methods I used in leading five class discussions. My methodological goal was to encourage as much student talk as possible and to limit the amount of teacher talk. In terms of Dr. Weidner's categories, the more "clarification," "inquiry," and "dialogue" that took place the better. As noted earlier, I was surprised to learn after the first discussion that I had talked sixty-eight percent of the class time. Though my subjective impression had been that the class had had a fairly good discussion, analysis of the videotape proved that I was the one who had the discussion while my students had a lecture. After viewing the tape, I resolved to ask more provocative questions, to wait longer for students to formulate their opinions, and to refuse to fill in the silences with my own voice. As the data for the second taping proved, I was not very successful in any of these aims. Indeed, at that point, it seemed to me that my hypothesis that

teaching behavior could be significantly improved through use of the TSA system was proving to be false.

The second taping was disastrous. It may have been a bad day for the teacher and/or for the students. Both seemed to be flat and uninspired. Whatever the reasons, I needed to make some changes if I hoped to improve. Thereafter, my preparation for class discussions became much more rigorous. I divided the idea or issue of each discussion into time segments and prepared lead questions for each segment. I gave much more attention to anticipated student responses and to the means of transition from one concept to the next.

My efforts in this direction seemed to improve the student-teacher talk ratio in the third taping. By the fourth and fifth sessions, I had become more adept at formulating questions that provoked student interest and response. Moreover, I found that the quality of student discussion -- something admittedly very difficult to assess -- had improved significantly by the last taping. As I seemed to improve, so did the class. Although I was not entirely satisfied with the results, I was able to increase student talk from twenty-seven percent in the second session to fifty-three percent in the last session.

Since method and objectives are intimately connected, the data on my affective and cognitive intentions (see Appendix VI) mirror the results of the discussion of methods. I wanted my students to "respond" rather than merely to "receive," but they could not do so until I stopped dominating the discussions. Similarly, I wanted my students to "apply," to "analyze," to "synthesize," and to "evaluate" rather than just to "know" or to "comprehend." It was not likely that the desirable behaviors would take place while I was talking and they were listening. By the fifth taping, I was able to considerably alter the student-teacher talk ratio so that students were actively engaged in creative thinking processes for two-thirds of the class period. I take this result to be the greatest success of my experiment.

Perhaps the most difficult area for me to evaluate was the verbal and non-verbal expressions (see Appendix VII) that I used in the classroom. Naturally I wanted to "support" student responses, both verbally and non-verbally, as much as possible, and I wanted to avoid "inattentive," "unresponsive," and "disapproving" behaviors. Judging from the videotapes, supporting student responses is my greatest strength. Both my verbal and non-verbal behavior were appropriate and encouraging to student discussion. After the first taping, I consciously attempted to increase the amount of "support" and "helping" behavior and to decrease the "routine" behavior. Except for the second session, I was successful in more than doubling supportive verbal expressions and more than tripling supportive non-verbal expressions by the last taping.

The results of my experiment seem to demonstrate that an instructor can significantly modify his behavior by using the Teacher Self Appraisal observation system. Through analysis of the teaching methods, objectives, and expressions I used in the classroom, I was able to bring my actual performance more closely in line with my course goals and objectives. Dr. Weidner has found that the lessons learned from teacher use of his system can be retained over a long period of time if they are supplemented by refresher exercises. Videotaping class sessions once or twice a year might be enough to retain the skills acquired.

The task of defining the goals a teacher hopes to achieve in a course is in itself a thought-provoking and worthwhile venture. Using videotape to record what actually occurs in the classroom is, to say the least, an enlightening process for anyone. As a result of this experiment I believe I have become a better teacher. I am more aware of what I am doing in the classroom and how I am doing it than ever before. My preparation for discussions, as well as for lectures, has become much more refined and effective.

Although the TSA system was quite helpful to me, I do not claim that it is a panacea for every teacher. It is possible, even likely,

that the presence of the videotape machine inhibits normal student and teacher behavior. Perhaps the major weakness, as well as the strength of the TSA system, is that the instructor judges and evaluates his own performance. It is likely that every teacher exhibits some behavior that might be distracting, unproductive or even harmful to the learning process and that such behavior can only be detected by an outside observer. An impartial visitor can sometimes see in a moment what hours of self-analyzed videotape could never reveal. On the other hand, TSA allows a teacher to observe himself in the quiet of his own office. Nobody else will know if he has had a particularly bad day or a particularly good one. As objectively as possible, he can see what he has done and, if necessary, make alterations to improve his performance. The fear of loss of status is not present, and the important business of becoming an effective and challenging teacher is encouraged.

APPENDIX I

METHODS

Teacher Talk

1. Lecture -- teacher talk or information giving.
2. Question -- teacher interrogative requests for specific information.
3. Demonstrate -- teacher supplements talk with visual clues or external props.
4. Direction -- teacher commands or insists students to comply.
5. Mastery -- teacher drills or practices specifics with students.
6. Problem-Solving -- teacher sets or poses a situation which requires the student to arrive at a predetermined solution.

Student Talk

7. Clarification -- teacher permits the student to express or elaborate feelings, opinions, or thoughts without interruption.
8. Inquiry -- teacher pursues and challenges student statements, or permits students to question.
9. Dialogue -- teacher allows students to interact, react, and discuss a topic or idea with interjections, but not inhibiting behavior.

APPENDIX II

OBJECTIVES

Affective

1. Receive -- teacher intends the student to listen or be conscious of current classroom activity.
2. Respond -- teacher intends for the student to comply.
3. Value -- teacher intends for the student to realize the worth of information, idea, belief, or concept, by utilizing words such as "good", "beautiful", "excellent", etc.

Cognitive

1. Know -- teacher intends the student to recall specific information, for which there is only one correct answer.
2. Comprehend -- teacher intends the student to translate, interpret in his own words, predict, or summarize given material.
3. Apply -- teacher intends the student to use the information in a situation that is different from the situation in which it was learned.
4. Analyze -- teacher intends the student to separate, compare, and establish relationships between concepts, information and ideas.
5. Synthesize -- teacher intends the student to combine previously learned information, opinions, and concepts into an original entity that satisfies the student.
6. Evaluate -- teacher intends the student to make a choice or selection from a predetermined number of alternatives.

APPENDIX III

EXPRESSIONS

Verbal

1. Support -- teacher praises, repeats student response, or uses student idea.
2. Helping -- teacher repeats statement or gives cues and assistance.
3. Receptive -- teacher indicates to a student that the lines of communication are open.
4. Routine -- teacher expressions which cannot be categorized as encouraging or inhibiting.
5. Inattentive -- teacher disinterest or impatience displayed by statements such as "hurry up", "not now", etc.
6. Unresponsive -- teacher openly ignores student question, request, or response.
7. Disapproval -- teacher admonishes, reprimands, or threatens student.

Non-Verbal

1. Support -- teacher gestures, facial expressions, and voice tone that convey approval.
2. Helping -- teacher gestures and pointing that assists students.
3. Receptive -- teacher maintains eye contact with students.
4. Routine -- teacher movements that cannot be coded as encouraging or inhibiting.
5. Inattentive -- teacher does not maintain eye contact, or body gestures that demonstrate an unwillingness to listen.
6. Unresponsive -- teacher gestures that openly ignore a student request.
7. Disapproval -- teacher frowns, gestures, and voice tones that convey dissatisfaction with student behavior.

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APPENDIX IV

SAMPLE WORKSHEET

TSA Observation System

		Objectives		Expressions	
Stop	Method	Affective	Cognitive	Verbal	Non-verbal
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
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11					
12					
13					
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26					
27					
28					
29					
30					

Method:
1. Lecture/talk
2. Question
3. Demonstrate
4. Mastery-Drill
5. Direction
6. Problem-Solving
7. Clarification
8. Inquiry
9. Dialogue

Objectives:
Affective
1. Receive
2. Respond
3. Value

Cognitive
1. Know
2. Comprehend
3. Apply
4. Analyze
5. Synthesize
6. Evaluate

Expressions:
Verbal & Non-Verbal
1. Support
2. Helping
3. Receptive
4. Routine
5. Inattentive
6. Unresponsive
7. Disapproval

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APPENDIX V

METHODS: RESULTS OF VIDEOTAPING

	TAPING				
Teacher Talk	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Lecture	48%	52%	41%	35%	35%
Question	18	14	12	14	10
Demonstrate	0	0	2	0	2
Direction	0	0	0	0	0
Mastery	0	0	0	0	0
Problem-Solving	2	7	5	3	0
TOTALS	68%	73%	60%	52%	47%
Student Talk					
Clarification	13%	10%	16%	22%	19%
Inquiry	16	12	19	26	27
Dialogue	3	5	5	0	7
TOTALS	32%	27%	40%	48%	53%

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APPENDIX VI

OBJECTIVES: RESULTS OF VIDEOTAPING

	TAPING				
Affective	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Receive	62%	66%	52%	46%	45%
Respond	37	32	48	51	55
Value	1	2	0	3	0
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Cognitive					
Know	6%	8%	4%	9%	7%
Comprehend	46	35	26	24	26
Apply	16	28	20	22	35
Analyze	21	26	32	25	21
Synthesize	10	3	23	20	18
Evaluate	1	0	5	0	3
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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APPENDIX VII

EXPRESSIONS: RESULTS OF VIDEOTAPING

	TAPING				
Verbal	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Support	10%	2%	15%	18%	24%
Helping	0	7	11	10	14
Receptive	36	30	43	44	41
Routine	54	61	31	28	31
Inattentive	0	0	0	0	0
Unresponsive	0	0	0	0	0
Disapproval	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Nonverbal					
Support	8%	3%	5%	16%	25%
Helping	2	7	15	15	9
Receptive	43	41	49	56	51
Routine	47	49	21	13	15
Inattentive	0	0	0	0	0
Unresponsive	0	0	0	0	0
Disapproval	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%